

Services pause sex assault prevention training

Los Angeles Times

Several U.S. military branches are pausing training related to the prevention of sexual assault in order to comply with one of President Donald Trump's executive orders related to diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

A directive issued by Marine Corps headquarters on Tuesday "asked the fleet to PAUSE on all (Sexual Assault Prevention and Reporting) training due to recent changes within the White House to remove diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) from all federal policies," according to an email obtained by the *Los Angeles Times*.

The Navy also confirmed it would cease such training for a period of time.

"The Navy is working to fully execute and implement all directives outlined in the Executive Orders issued by the President, ensuring that they are car-

ried out with utmost professionalism, efficiency, and in alignment with national security objectives," an official Navy statement said.

A military official, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals, also confirmed the policy change within the Marine Corps to *The Times*.

Requests for comment from the Department of Defense, the Army, Coast Guard and Air Force were not immediately returned. Details of the training policy change were first reported by *Business Insider* on Thursday.

"We're seeing a lot of things happen very quickly that aren't well thought out," said Elisa Cardnell, chief executive of the Service Women's Action Network, an advocacy organization for women in the armed forces. "It is very worrisome."

It was not immediately clear how Trump's efforts to purge

diversity initiatives in the federal government required a pause on the military's decadeslong battle to reduce the prevalence of sexual assault within the armed forces.

The types of training now frozen include lessons focused on the nature of consent and sexual harassment, as well as instructions on how to safely report abuse within the military, according to the military official who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The Sexual Assault Prevention and Reporting training program was launched in 2005 and is considered "the central authority charged with preventing sexual assault in the military," according to the program's website.

Since its inception, the number of reported sexual assaults within the armed forces increased dramatically.

There were approximately

1,700 reported sexual assaults in the armed forces in fiscal year 2004, according to military records. That number jumped to 8,515 in fiscal year 2023.

Although reporting has improved, the armed forces have continued to face sex abuse scandals. Last month, Maj. Michael Stockin, an Army anesthesiologist, pleaded guilty to multiple counts of sexual misconduct stemming from allegations made by more than 40 patients between 2019 and 2022.

The pause is narrowly focused on training programs and would not affect resources for survivors of sexual trauma or for those reporting or seeking to prosecute violent sexual crimes, according to the statement issued by the Navy.

But the email reviewed by *The Times* did not contain an endpoint for the pause, and the official who spoke to *The Times* described it as "open-ended."

Critics: Medal of Honor museum shortchanged airman

BY JONATHAN SNYDER

Stars and Stripes

A petition calling for the National Medal of Honor Museum to include a dedicated exhibit for Air Force Master Sgt. John Chapman has revived longstanding criticism that the Navy SEAL community sought to "diminish his contributions."

More than 24,000 people have signed the Change.org petition requesting that the museum add Chapman's story to approximately 200 focused presentations when it opens next month in Arlington, Texas.

Chapman, a combat controller, was killed in action on March 4, 2002, during the Battle of Ta-

kur Ghar in Afghanistan. He was the first airman to receive the Medal of Honor since the Vietnam War and only the 19th in the service's history.

His photo will be displayed at the museum entrance, and his story will be included in a video inside, his sister, Lori Chapman Longfritz, wrote on Facebook.

However, she argued that his legacy warrants a dedicated display, similar to one planned for retired Navy SEAL Master Chief Petty Officer Britt Slabinski, who fought alongside Chapman that day.

"The museum's choice to honor Britt Slabinski without acknowledging John Chapman

appears influenced by politics and seems like an extension of the Naval Special Warfare's efforts to diminish Chapman's contributions," states the petition, written by David Parke, who identified himself as a veteran of the Army, Navy and Marine Corps.

Slabinski, who attended Chapman's Medal of Honor ceremony in 2018, has credited Chapman with saving the lives of their team at Takur Ghar and supported his posthumous award.

Longfritz said the museum initially indicated her brother would receive a dedicated exhibit but later reversed course.

Longfritz reiterated claims that Slabinski, now a museum board member, left her mortally wounded brother behind on the mountain.

That allegation, along with reports of interservice tensions over competing accounts of heroism, resurfaced when both men were awarded the Medal of Honor.

In an interview with *The New York Times* published Aug. 17, 2016, Slabinski "acknowledged that he might have made a mistake under intense fire" in believing Chapman was dead and said he was "still haunted by what happened on the mountain."

Talks to focus on future of US in Europe

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The U.S. military's role in Europe will be at the forefront of talks this week as new Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth arrives in Brussels for two days of meetings with European allies.

Uncertainty about President Donald Trump's plans for the U.S. European Command mission has allies considering the ramifications of potentially deep cuts. Changes could be in store for defense spending, the war in Ukraine and American troop levels on the Continent.

Gatherings of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group on Wednesday and allied defense chiefs on Thursday will be followed by a meeting over the weekend in Germany, where Vice President JD Vance will lead an American delegation at a premier global defense forum, the annual Munich Security Conference.

Former top U.S. military commanders say the key to any new approach will hinge on finding a

way to ensure that enough American firepower remains in Europe to dissuade Russia from expanding its war beyond Ukraine.

"(The Trump administration) will shift some forces, I'm sure, to the Pacific theater," said James Foggo, a retired four-star admiral who previously served as the top U.S. naval commander in Europe. "But how fast and how soon will the cuts be? Will it be gradual? Will you notice? Or will it hurt?"

Hegseth's Pentagon is being filled out with a team of China hawks who have argued that the United States is spread too thin.

They assert that the U.S. cannot credibly deter China in the Pacific while also underwriting the bulk of the security in Europe.

"We need to grapple with scarcity," Elbridge Colby, nominated to serve as a top deputy to Hegseth in the Pentagon, told *Stars and Stripes* in May. "We don't have a two-war military. We're not even sure if we have a

one-war military, vis-a-vis China."

In Europe, there are questions about the durability of a U.S. military presence that has served as the centerpiece of NATO's efforts to deter Russian aggression.

There also are doubts about Europe's ability to immediately fill the void. Years of underinvestment have left it lacking capabilities ranging from air defense and artillery to airlift, ammunition stockpiles and heavy maneuver.

When asked late last month about news reports that the U.S. was looking to pull up to 20,000 troops from Europe, the Pentagon said Hegseth is reviewing the military's force posture.

"That means taking a hard look at where our forces are stationed and making sure they are in the right places, with the right capabilities, to meet today's challenges," spokesman Lt. Col. Charlie Dietz said in a Jan. 30 statement.

It remains to be seen how that

plays out in Europe, where a combination of 65,000 permanently based troops and a rotational contingent add up to about 100,000 uniformed personnel overall.

Foggo, the dean of the Center for Maritime Strategy at the Navy League, said President Joe Biden's "absolute debacle" of a withdrawal from Afghanistan should serve as a lesson for any planner considering a large and rapid drawdown in Europe.

"Some would say it's apples and oranges, that Afghanistan is not downsizing in Europe," Foggo said. "That's not the point. The point is the Afghanistan withdrawal suffered by not having a plan that was any good. So if we're going to pull forces out of Europe, we need to do it incrementally, deliberately, in collaboration with the allies."

That means ensuring that allies are in a position to fill capability gaps to deter Russia, he said, adding that "if they don't like it, you might have to strong-arm them a little bit."

Lawsuit targets ban on transgender military service

The Seattle Times

Gender Justice League, a Seattle-based human rights organization, is suing President Donald Trump and his administration over its ban on transgender people serving in the military.

Filed by the Human Rights Campaign and Lambda Legal, two leading LGBTQ+ advocacy groups, the lawsuit challenges an executive order Trump signed Jan. 27 that disparages transgender identity and claims transgender people are morally and medically unfit to serve. The executive order will likely receive a number of legal challenges that may delay its implementation.

The complaint argues the executive order's directives violate the equal protection and due process guarantees of the Fifth Amendment, and the right to free speech of the First Amendment.

"They lack any legitimate or rational justification, let alone the compelling and exceedingly persuasive ones required," the lawsuit states.

Six current transgender service members who have openly served for years, and one transgender person who seeks to enlist, are also plaintiffs in the lawsuit filed Thursday in U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington.

Three are senior officers with "an impressive military record" who have earned numerous medals and commendations, the lawsuit states. One of the plaintiffs, Sgt. 1st Class Jane Doe, is a 37-year-old transgender woman who has served in the U.S. Army for more than 17 years and is currently stationed at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.

"Many of these folks have been serving 19, 20, 21 years, sacrificing an immense amount for our country," said Danni Askini, executive director of national programs at the Gender Justice League.

"I think the proof of their service contrasts so starkly

from the preamble of the executive order, which is just spiteful, hateful, bigoted in the worst terms."

Trump's executive order, which claims "the Armed Forces have been afflicted with radical gender ideology," directs the Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to promptly "end invented and identification-based pronoun usage."

The order also directs the secretary to update the department's military medical standards within 60 days, and declares that the armed forces cannot allow "males to use or share sleeping, changing, or bathing facilities designated for females."

Dems: Spending bill is chance to blunt Trump

The Washington Post

Some Democrats warned they will not cooperate with Republicans in reaching a government funding deal because of their objections to President Donald Trump's and Elon Musk's unilateral actions to radically downsize the federal government.

At least one Democrat did so clearly Sunday as Republicans struggle to craft a compromise that would continue government spending after March 14.

Republicans have in the past few years struggled to meet funding deadlines because of strenuous opposition from far-right lawmakers. Republicans have had to repeatedly turn to Democrats for help.

"Look, if we have to take steps to be able to hold them accountable, use the leverage that we have to force it, I cannot support efforts that will continue this lawless-

ness that we're seeing when it comes to this administration's actions," Sen. Andy Kim, D-N.J., said on NBC's "Meet the Press." "And for us to be able to support government funding in that way only for them to turn it around to dismantle the government, that is not something that should be allowed."

Kim is one of several Democratic senators who have fiercely protested the effective shutdown of the U.S. Agency for International Development after Trump ordered a foreign aid freeze and Musk's U.S. DOGE Service showed up at the agency's headquarters. Kim and other Democrats have said the unilateral gutting of USAID is unconstitutional because it was created by Congress and warn the action will serve as a playbook for other actions that they contend are illegal.

"I've worked through multiple

government shutdowns; I would be the last person to want to get to that stage," Kim said. "But we are at a point where we are basically on the cusp of a constitutional crisis, seeing this administration taking steps that are so clearly illegal. And until we see a change in that behavior, we should not allow and condone that, nor should we assist in that."

Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., one of the most vocal critics of the assault on USAID, told ABC's "This Week" that people are angry and the president and his allies want "everyone to stay quiet."

"This is a fundamental corruption. And democracies don't last forever," Murphy said. "We see this as a crisis of epic proportions."

In a letter sent to public servants and obtained by The Washington Post, Senate Democrats

said they are ready to support any whistleblower seeking to share information about "wrongdoing, abuse of power, and threats to public safety."

Over the past week, Trump and Musk, the world's richest man, have taken a sledgehammer to 15 government agencies, including USAID, the Department of the Treasury and the Office of Personnel Management. While Republicans in the House and Senate have largely remained supportive of Trump's and Musk's actions, Democrats — who, as the minority in both chambers, have little legislative power to limit the White House — have struggled to form a cohesive defense.

But one seems to be building around their singular point of legislative leverage right now: a deadline to fund the government coming up in a little over a month.

Germany's Scholz derides Trump's Gaza proposal

Associated Press

BERLIN — German Chancellor Olaf Scholz described President Donald Trump's suggestion that the U.S. could take ownership of the Gaza Strip, relocate its population and redevelop it as a "scandal" in a pre-election debate Sunday.

His main challenger also voiced unease but suggested there's "a lot of rhetoric" coming from Washington.

The center-left Scholz and center-right challenger Friedrich Merz, the front-runner in the Feb. 23 election, discussed top domestic issues and also addressed foreign policy three weeks into Trump's new term.

Asked what he made of Trump's proposal to redevelop Gaza into "the Riviera of the Middle East," Scholz replied: "A scandal. Besides that, a really terrible expression," given the extent of the destruction that is now visible

there.

"The relocation of populations is unacceptable and against international law," he added. He pointed to the position of Egypt and Jordan.

"I share this assessment," Merz said. "But it is one of a whole series of proposals coming from the American administration that are certainly disconcerting, but one has to wait and see what is really meant seriously and how it is implemented — there's probably a lot of rhetoric in this."

On Monday, Trump went further with his plan, saying in an interview with Fox News' Bret Baier that Palestinians in Gaza would not have a right to return under his plan for U.S. "ownership" of the war-torn territory, contradicting other officials in his administration who have sought to argue Trump was only calling for the temporary relocation of its population.

More Israeli checkpoints slicing up the West Bank

Associated Press

RAMALLAH, West Bank — Abdullah Fauzi, a banker from the northern West Bank city of Nablus, leaves home at 4 a.m. to reach his job by 8 a.m., and he's often late.

His commute used to take an hour — until Hamas' attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, after which Israel launched its offensive in the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli military also ramped up raids against Palestinian militants in the northern West Bank and diverted its residents through seven new checkpoints, doubling Fauzi's time on the road.

Now it's gotten worse.

Since the ceasefire in Gaza between Israel and Hamas took effect, Fauzi's drive to the West Bank's business and administrative hub, Ramallah, has become convoluted, at least a four-hour wiggle through steep lanes and

farm roads as Israel further tightens the noose around Palestinian cities in measures it considers essential to guard against militant attacks.

"You can fly to Paris while we're not reaching our homes," the 42-year-old said from the Atara checkpoint outside Ramallah last week, as Israeli soldiers searched scores of cars, one by one.

"Whatever this is, they've planned it well," he said. "It's well designed to make our life hell."

Since the ceasefire started, more checkpoints started going up between Palestinian cities, slicing up the occupied West Bank and creating choke points the Israeli army can shut off on a whim. Crossings that had been open 24/7 started closing during morning and evening rush hours, upturning the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

Trump: Canada becoming a state is a real idea

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said he is serious about wanting Canada to become the 51st state in an interview that aired Sunday during the Super Bowl preshow.

“Yeah it is,” Trump told Fox News Channel’s Bret Baier when asked whether his talk of annexing Canada is “a real thing” — as Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau recently warned.

“I think Canada would be much better off being the 51st state because we lose \$200 billion a year with Canada. And I’m not going to let that happen,” he said. “Why are we paying \$200 billion a year, essentially a subsidy to Canada?”

The U.S. is not subsidizing Canada. The U.S. buys products from the natural resource-rich

nation, including commodities like oil.

While the trade gap in goods has ballooned in recent years to \$72 billion in 2023, the deficit largely reflects America’s imports of Canadian energy products.

Trump has repeatedly suggested that Canada would be better off if it agreed to become the 51st U.S. state — a prospect that is deeply unpopular among Canadians.

Trudeau said Friday during a closed-door session with business and labor leaders that Trump’s talk of making Canada the 51st U.S. state was “a real thing” and tied to desire for access to the country’s natural resources.

“Mr. Trump has it in mind that the easiest way to do it is absorbing our country and it is a

real thing. In my conversations with him on ...,” Trudeau said, according to CBC, Canada’s public broadcaster. “They’re very aware of our resources of what we have, and they very much want to be able to benefit from those.”

Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One on Sunday as he traveled to the Super Bowl game in New Orleans, Trump continued to threaten a country that has long been one of the U.S.’s closest allies.

He claimed that Canada is “not viable as a country” without U.S. trade and warned that the founding NATO member can no longer depend on the U.S. for military protection.

In the Fox interview, which was pre-taped this weekend in Florida, Trump also said that he has not seen enough action from

Canada and Mexico to stave off the tariffs he has threatened to impose on the U.S.’ two largest trading partners once a 30-day extension is up.

Trump last week agreed to a 30-day pause on his plan to slap Mexico and Canada with a 25% tariff on all imports except for Canadian oil, natural gas and electricity, which would be taxed at a lower 10% rate, after both countries took steps to appease his concerns about border security and drug trafficking.

Aboard Air Force One, Trump said that he would on Monday announce a 25% tariff on all steel and aluminum imports into the U.S., including from Canada and Mexico, and unveil an additional plan for reciprocal tariffs later in the week.

Court blocks transfer of Venezuelans to Gitmo

Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — A federal court on Sunday blocked the Trump administration from sending three Venezuelan immigrants held in New Mexico to Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba as part of the president’s immigration crackdown.

In a legal filing earlier in the day, lawyers for the men said the detainees “fit the profile of those the administration has prioritized for detention in Guantanamo, i.e. Venezuelan men detained in the El Paso area with (false) charges of connections with the Tren de Aragua gang.”

It asked a U.S. District Court in New Mexico for a temporary restraining order blocking their transfer, adding that “the mere uncertainty the government has created surrounding the availability of legal process and counsel access is sufficient to autho-

rize the modest injunction.”

During a brief hearing, Judge Kenneth J. Gonzales granted the temporary order, which was opposed by the government, said Jessica Vosburgh, an attorney for the three men.

The Tren de Aragua gang originated in a lawless prison in the central Venezuelan state of Aragua more than a decade ago and has expanded in recent years as millions of desperate Venezuelans fled President President Nicolás Maduro’s rule and migrated to other parts of Latin America and into the U.S.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said Wednesday that more than 8,000 people have been arrested in immigration enforcement actions since Trump’s Jan. 20 inauguration.

Trump has vowed to deport millions of the estimated 11.7 million people in the U.S. illegally.

Bald eagles soaring with increased recognition

Associated Press

WEST ORANGE, N.J. — Along the long road from American icon to endangered species and back again, the bald eagle is having a moment.

The eagles find themselves in an updraft of sorts since the early 2000s, when the federal government took the thriving birds off its endangered species list with more states following suit.

In December, Joe Biden signed legislation making the raptor the country’s national bird. And to the chagrin or elation of football fans, the Philadelphia Eagles won the Super Bowl on Sunday.

The story centers on the banning of DDT, a chemical insecticide with environmental side effects that included thin-shelled eagle eggs. That touched off a cratering in the number of eagles across the country, and officials prohibited the pesticide in

1972.

To rebuild the birds’ numbers in their historic range across the country, conservationists imported birds from places where their populations were stable, including from Canada. Early on, they also removed eggs from nesting birds’ nests and were safely hatched outside the nest before being returned as eaglets for their parents to raise, according to Kathy Clark, the head of New Jersey’s Endangered and Nongame Species Program.

Beyond the birds coming off endangered lists, they made headlines recently for finally getting their due as the county’s national bird, an oversight because the bald eagle was already on the national seal and many thought it already had that status, said Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., who sponsored legislation that Biden signed last month.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Amazon pays \$3.95M in suit on stolen driver tips

DC WASHINGTON — Amazon settled a lawsuit with D.C. over stolen tips, with the e-commerce behemoth agreeing to pay \$3.95 million to the District, including \$2.4 million in penalties.

The litigation, filed in 2022 by then-D.C. Attorney General Karl A. Racine, was related to Amazon Flex, a quick-delivery program launched in 2015. According to the Federal Trade Commission, Amazon misled customers between late 2016 and August 2019 over its tip policy. The company encouraged customers to tip drivers and assured them 100% of those tips went to the driver, according to the lawsuit.

Instead, according to the FTC, Amazon had changed its tip policy by diverting a large portion of tips to pay wages. The policy was implemented in 2016 but customers were not alerted to the change until 2019.

Suspect in custody after officer was fatally shot

GA ROSWELL — Authorities are investigating the fatal shooting of a police officer in Georgia by a suspect who has been taken into custody.

A police officer in Roswell responded to a report of a suspicious person in the parking lot of a pickleball club, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation said in a news release.

The officer approached the man, identified as Edward Espinoza, 23, for questioning, the bureau said. Espinoza pulled a

handgun and fired multiple shots at the officer, who has not been identified. The officer died at a hospital, the bureau said.

Drug lord's son-in-law pleads guilty in scheme

TX McALLEN — The son-in-law of a Mexican drug lord pleaded guilty to a scheme that used violence and threats to fix prices and control the transnational used-car market at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Carlos Favian Martinez, son-in-law to former Gulf Cartel drug lord Osiel Cárdenas Guillén, entered a guilty plea before a federal court in Houston to charges including conspiracy to fix prices, monopolizing, interfering with commerce by extortion and money laundering. Nine others were also indicted in November 2022 for their participation.

Prosecutors alleged the 11-year scheme started in 2011 and involved fixing prices of forwarding agency services operating in Los Indios, Texas, about 20 miles northwest of Brownsville.

The indictment and court testimony highlighted beatings, kidnappings and fatal shootings that were part of the conspiracy between the defendants who used brutal force against several people who charged less for their services or who were non-compliant with the extortion tax.

Amtrak to pay \$505M for control of Union Station

DC WASHINGTON — Amtrak struck a deal to pay a real estate firm \$505 million for control of D.C.'s Union Station, likely ending a

dispute that might have been complicated by the Trump administration.

The agreement must be approved by a judge. That final step would end a years-long legal fight, freeing Amtrak to proceed with planned renovations of the historic space. But the price tag is more than double what the rail agency had hoped to pay.

The Union Station Redevelopment Corp., the nonprofit tasked by the federal government with managing the property and orchestrating its \$10 billion expansion, said in a statement it was "pleased" by the settlement, saying it would enable them to focus on "the ongoing transformation of Union Station into a modern, world-class facility."

Arrests made in thefts aimed at sports players

OH CINCINNATI — For months, daring bands of thieves linked to South American gangs have been making off with piles of jewelry and cash from the homes of the biggest superstars in sports, targeting the likes of the NFL's Patrick Mahomes and Travis Kelce.

Sophisticated pillagers have deployed drones and signal jamming devices, sometimes posing as delivery drivers or maintenance workers, to gain access to gated neighborhoods and thwart home security systems, according to warnings issued by the NFL and NBA.

But in recent weeks, investigators across the U.S. have made a handful of arrests connected to at least one of the high-profile heists and discovered

stolen sports memorabilia, jewelry and art stuffed into storage units in New Jersey.

A group of Chilean men stopped in January while driving in Ohio were charged with stealing nearly \$300,000 worth of designer luggage, watches and jewelry from Cincinnati Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow's house.

Constitutions still assume all officials are male

SD PIERRE — South Dakota's constitution refers to the governor as a "he."

But for the past six years, the governor was a "she" — Kristi Noem, the first female to hold the position there. The conservative Republican pushed a constitutional amendment to change the gendered language. But voters rejected the measure in the 2024 general election that also would have been inclusive of nonbinary people.

Across the nation, state constitutions presume officeholders are male, and they increasingly are outdated.

This year, a record of 13 women were serving as governor before Noem stepped down to serve in President Donald Trump's Cabinet. In state legislatures, 2,469 women are serving, according to the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University.

Most states haven't modernized their constitutions to reflect the rise of women in politics. Among those that have are New York's, which became gender-neutral in 2001, and Vermont's, where voters approved a change from "men" to "persons" in 1994.

— From wire reports

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Reporting
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and Military News

Eagles rout Chiefs in Super Bowl

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Yo Philly: Jalen Hurts and Nick Sirianni are world champions.

A ferocious Philadelphia Eagles defense tormented and frustrated Patrick Mahomes while Hurts made all the plays the offense needed.

So much for the Kansas City Chiefs' quest for a Super Bowl three-peat.

It wasn't even close.

Cooper DeJean got a pick-6 on his 22nd birthday, Josh Sweat pressured Mahomes all night and the Eagles routed the Chiefs 40-22 on Sunday to secure the franchise's second Super Bowl championship.

Hurts threw for two touchdowns and ran for a score on a tush push to earn Super Bowl MVP honors, and Vic Fangio's defense was so dominant that the Eagles didn't need much from Saquon Barkley.

The game-changing running back finished with 57 yards, breaking Terrell Davis' record for yards rushing in a season, playoffs included. Hurts threw for 221 yards.

"This is the ultimate team game. You can't be great without the greatness of others. Great performance by everybody — offense, defense, special teams," Sirianni said. "We didn't really ever care what anyone thought about how we won, or their opinions. All we want to do is win."

Hurts has been doubted since he started for Alabama in a national championship game and was benched for Tua Tagovailoa at halftime. Finishing second to Mahomes in MVP voting two years ago didn't quite silence all the detractors. Now, he's hoisted the Vince Lombardi Trophy.

Sirianni, who mocked fans chanting "Fire Nick!" during a victory over Cleveland in October and was called a "clown" on national television, also quieted critics by adding a championship ring to a coaching résumé that includes the fifth-best win-

ning percentage in league history.

"Things come right on time. The last time around, it wasn't our time, it wasn't my time and sometimes you have to accept that you have to wait your turn," said Hurts, who nearly led the Eagles to victory against the Chiefs two years ago in Arizona.

With Donald Trump becoming the first president in office to attend a Super Bowl, the Eagles outplayed Kansas City in every facet, delighting a raucous Philly crowd that celebrated each score with a familiar rendition of "Fly! Eagles! Fly!"

Even Taylor Swift's presence couldn't help the Chiefs. They lost for the first time in 10 games this season with the pop superstar in a suite watching boyfriend Travis Kelce, who didn't catch a pass until late in the third quarter.

Not in Kansas City's worst nightmares could its fans have imagined such a lackluster performance. The Chiefs had won three of the previous five Super Bowls, losing 31-9 to Tom Brady and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers four years ago.

Mahomes was 8-0 against Fangio's defenses before the longtime coordinator and former Broncos head coach outcoached Andy Reid, capping his first season with his hometown team. Reid fell to 3-3 in Super Bowls, including a loss with the Eagles.

The Eagles sacked Mahomes six times, the most of his career, including 2½ by Sweat and two by Milton Williams. And they did it without Fangio calling a single blitz.

"Defense wins championships," Hurts said. "We saw how they played today. We saw the difference they made in the game. They gave us opportunities, gave us short fields. And we're able to do what we do."

Barkley, the 2024 AP NFL Offensive Player of the Year, only had 31 yards rushing in the first

half when Philly built a 24-0 lead.

The Chiefs were aiming to become the third team in NFL history to win three straight championships and the first to three-peat in the Super Bowl era. Two years ago, Mahomes led a comeback and Harrison Butker kicked the game-winning field goal in the final minute for a 38-35 victory over the Eagles. Mahomes rallied Kansas City to an overtime victory over San Francisco last year.

"That's a great football team and we had to come out and play our best, and we did," Sirianni said.

This time, a revamped Philly defense featuring eight new starters from the 2022 team made sure Mahomes had no chance to pull off his magic.

Sirianni was showered with Gatorade with nearly three minutes left in the game while backup QB Kenny Pickett took snaps in mop-up duty.

"Today was a rough day all around. Nothing went right. I didn't coach well. Proud of our guys for fighting. We will learn from this," Reid said. "Too many turnovers, too many penalties. Against a good football team, can't do that."

Barkley helped push Hurts into the end zone from the 1 to give Philadelphia a 7-0 lead in the first quarter.

Up 10-0 after Jake Elliott's 48-yard field goal, Sweat and Jalyx Hunt sacked Mahomes on consecutive plays. Mahomes then rolled out and made an errant throw that was picked by DeJean, who returned it 38 yards for a 17-0 lead.

"When you have a great line up front ... makes it easier on the back end, and when they take the run away, it allows us to get the pass rush going," DeJean said.

It was Mahomes' first pick-6 in 21 career playoff games and ended a streak of 297 straight passes without an interception.

"We didn't start how we want-

ed to. The turnovers hurt. I take all the blame for that," Mahomes said.

All-Pro linebacker Zack Baun picked Mahomes again late in the second quarter, and Hurts connected with A.J. Brown on a 12-yard TD pass for a 24-0 lead.

Hurts threw a perfect 46-yard TD pass to DeVonta Smith to make it 34-0 late in the third.

Mahomes fired a 24-yard TD pass to Xavier Worthy to avoid the shutout, but the 2-point conversion failed. He threw two late, mostly meaningless TD passes, one to DeAndre Hopkins and another to Worthy.

After two weeks of discussions about questionable calls that led to public perception that officials favor the Chiefs—a theory NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell called "ridiculous"—the first penalty of the game only fueled critics.

A 32-yard pass from Hurts to Brown to the Chiefs 18 on fourth-and-2 was negated by a penalty for offensive pass interference. Brady, now a Fox analyst, and officiating analyst Mike Pereira both disagreed with the call, although Brown shoved Trent McDuffie's facemask.

On the next possession, the Eagles benefited from an unnecessary roughness penalty on McDuffie against Dallas Goedert following an incomplete pass on third-and-5.

Hurts then connected with Jahan Dotson on a 27-yard pass to the 1 and scored on the next play.

Hurts' streak of 217 passes without a pick ended in the first half when he was intercepted deep in Kansas City territory, but the Chiefs didn't capitalize.

The Green Bay Packers are the only NFL team to win three championships in a row, doing it from 1929-31 and 1965-67.

The NBA's Los Angeles Lakers from 2000-02, led by Kobe Bryant and Shaquille O'Neill, are the last team in the major American professional leagues to win three straight titles.

With MVP, Eagles QB quiets doubters

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Jalen Hurts has often been judged by his failings more than his successes over the course of his career.

Getting benched at halftime of a college football championship game. Being forced to transfer from Alabama to Oklahoma just to be able to regain a starting job. Getting drafted in the second round to be a backup and then having his passing prowess questioned as he quickly became a starter and had a successful launch to his NFL career.

All those doubts helped fuel Hurts along the way and now he will be forever known as a Super Bowl MVP.

"I'll always be the same guy," Hurts said. "I was telling someone that I'm the same kid that came to a national championship and lost, went back and got benched and had to transfer and had to go through this unprecedented journey. That kid always kept the main thing the main thing and always was true to his

vision of what he saw.

"It all began with greater leadership and doing it the right way."

While Hurts wasn't asked to do too much on a dominant defensive night for Philadelphia, he came through at nearly every opportunity when he was needed as the calm he has shown throughout his career was evident on football's biggest stage.

He went 17-for-22 for 221 yards and two touchdowns, and ran for 72 yards and a touchdown in a 40-22 win over Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs that avenged a Super Bowl loss two years ago against Kansas City.

"Dealing with everything that came with the last Super Bowl, still leaving empty a little bit because as great as the performance was, it wasn't enough to win," Hurts said. "Going through those emotions, and processing those emotions and processing those things lit a great flame in me. It enhanced my desire to win significantly."

Hurts was outstanding in that

game, throwing for 304 yards and a TD and rushing for 70 yards and three more scores but could only watch as Harrison Butker kicked a go-ahead field goal with 8 seconds left for a 38-35 win.

Hurts turned that year into a \$255 million, five-year contract the following offseason, but it didn't quiet the critics who questioned whether Hurts was holding back the Eagles offense at various points the past two years.

Outside of an early interception against the Chiefs — his first since Week 10 against Dallas — Hurts was nearly flawless against Steve Spagnuolo's defense.

"The criticism of him blows my mind, because I think he's so special," coach Nick Sirianni said. "I mean he won so many games and works his butt off and just continues to get better and block out everything and just focus on the task at hand of getting better, putting himself in a position to win each week."

He converted scrambles

when he faced pressure and kept finding open receivers, with his 46-yard deep shot to DeVonta Smith making it 34-0 in the third quarter, providing an exclamation point to a lopsided Super Bowl win.

"In the biggest moments, when there's the biggest haters or doubters, this man just, I don't know, just outshines and takes command," left tackle Jordan Mailata said.

Hurts also threw a 12-yard touchdown pass to A.J. Brown late in the first half and scored on a 1-yard tush push for the first score of the game, leading to a statistical performance achieved only by Hall of Famer Joe Montana in Super Bowl history.

The two are the only quarterbacks to throw for at least 200 yards and two TDs, rush for at least 50 yards and a score.

Hurts is just the fourth quarterback to lose his first Super Bowl start and then win one as a starter, joining Hall of Famers John Elway, Bob Griese and Len Dawson.

Philadelphia RB Barkley sets record, kisses trophy

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Saquon Barkley set an NFL single-season rushing record in the Super Bowl, held his young daughter as a torrent of confetti fluttered around them and flashed a smile as he held a Philadelphia newspaper with "CHAMPS!" stamped above his photo.

The Eagles running back then grasped what he really wanted to kiss and hold on this night in the Superdome — what he could only hope was ahead following his tumultuous end in New York that diverted his career down the turnpike to Philadelphia.

The 2,000-yard rusher earned his turn with the Lombardi Trophy.

"She looked prettier in per-

son, I'll tell you that," Barkley said. "Something that you dream of. I'm just happy to hold it, be able to give it a kiss."

Barkley finished with a modest 57 yards rushing in Eagles' 40-22 win over Kansas City in the Super Bowl — a paltry number for an elite back who posted seven touchdown runs of 60-plus yards this season — but the total was enough to set the NFL single-season rushing record, postseason included, topping the mark of 2,476 yards set by Terrell Davis.

He ended perhaps the greatest debut season of any free agent in Philadelphia sports history on perhaps the greatest championship team the city has ever seen with 2,504 total yards

rushing and 18 rushing touchdowns.

"Hell of a year, right? I couldn't do it without the big boys up front, everyone on this team. I just appreciate them — the whole Eagles organization," Barkley said. "Of me being a newcomer, welcoming me in with open arms and helping build confidence back in me too. That was definitely helpful."

"It was a hell of a year, but all of the numbers and stats or records are cool, but the best thing is to be able to hold that Lombardi Trophy."

Barkley, the AP NFL Offensive Player of the Year, needed only 30 yards to top Davis' total set in 1998 when he helped the Denver Broncos win the Super

Bowl.

Barkley ran the ball on the first offensive play of the Super Bowl and finally got the mark after a slow first half on a 2-yard run on the last play of the half. Barkley had 12 carries for 31 yards for a measly 2.6 yards per carry. He averaged 5.8 yards in the regular season.

The Eagles were fine without Barkley's usually spectacular production. Thanks to two interceptions by the defense and two total touchdowns from Jalen Hurts, the Eagles led the Chiefs 24-0 at halftime.

Barkley joined Davis as one of only two players in NFL history with at least 400 yards rushing and five touchdowns in a single postseason.

Brooks, Green help Rockets snap skid

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Dillon Brooks scored 19 points, Jalen Green added 18 and the short-handed Houston Rockets snapped a six-game skid with a 94-87 victory over the Toronto Raptors on Sunday.

The Raptors led by four early in the fourth quarter before Houston used a 14-2 run to make it 77-69 with about 7 minutes to go.

Houston was up by four a couple of minutes later when Green made two 3-pointers to power a 9-3 spurt that extended the lead to 86-76.

The Rockets were without Fred VanVleet for a fifth straight game because of an ankle injury and Steven Adams was out because they played Saturday. All-Star Alperen Sengun left in the first quarter with

back spasms.

Jeff Green and Jock Landale filled in for Sengun and Green had a season-high 14 points while Landale added 11 with a season-best 10 rebounds.

Immanuel Quickley had 20 points for the Raptors, who lost a fourth straight.

Toronto missed Grady Dick in the second half after he left the game with a neck bruise following a collision with Amen Thompson in the second quarter.

Pistons 112, Hornets 102: Cade Cunningham had 19 points, 12 assists and 10 rebounds as host Detroit beat short-handed Charlotte.

The triple-double was Cunningham's eighth of the season, the third-highest total in franchise history. Grant Hill had 13 in 1996-97 and 10 in 1995-96.

Tobias Harris added 20 points for the Pistons, who never trailed, and Jalen Duren had 16 points and 12 rebounds.

Miles Bridges scored 30 points for Charlotte, which has lost seven of eight. Seth Curry added 26.

The Pistons led 90-73 going into the fourth quarter, but the Hornets started the period with a 14-0 run.

Cunningham and Dennis Schroeder hit back-to-back jumpers to give Detroit a 97-90 lead with 6:33 left, and the Pistons pulled back away down the stretch.

Bucks 135, 76ers 127: Damian Lillard scored a season-high 43 points to go along with eight assists and seven rebounds as Milwaukee beat visiting Philadelphia.

Gary Trent Jr. added a sea-

son-high 23 points and Bobby Portis had 18 points and 12 rebounds.

The Bucks were missing two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo for a fourth straight game as he deals with a strained left calf. Bucks coach Doc Rivers said before the game that Antetokounmpo likely will remain out through the All-Star break.

Tyrese Maxey scored 39 points for the 76ers, the 18th straight game in which he had at least 25. Joel Embiid scored 27 and Guerschon Yabusele added 18.

Milwaukee won for just the second time in its last seven games. This was the Bucks' second home game in their last nine contests.

Philadelphia has lost three straight and five of its past six.

Schmaltz scores winner as Utah beats Caps in SO

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Nick Schmaltz scored the shootout winner, leading the Utah Hockey Club to a 5-4 victory over the Washington Capitals on Sunday.

Josh Doan and Dylan Guenther each had a goal and an assist, and Michael Carcone and Jack McBain also scored for Utah, which has won three of its past four games. Utah jumped out to an early lead when Doan scored just over a minute into the game and Carcone scored 32 seconds later.

Connor Ingram had nine saves on 11 shots before leaving the game due to an upper-body injury. Karel Vejmelka stopped 30 of 32 shots in relief and all three shootout attempts for Utah.

Tom Wilson scored twice, Alex Ovechkin had three assists and Dylan Strome and Pierre-Luc Dubois added goals for

Washington, which has lost three of its past five games. Logan Thompson, who entered the game ranked second in the NHL in save percentage, made 24 saves.

Lightning 5, Canadiens 3: Victor Hedman had a goal and an assist as visiting Tampa Bay beat slumping Montreal in the final NHL game before the 4 Nations Face-Off.

Nick Paul, Brayden Point, Zemgus Girgensons and Anthony Cirelli also scored for Tampa Bay, which stretched its winning streak to four games. Andrei Vasilevskiy made 32 saves.

Brendan Gallagher scored twice and Christian Dvorak added a goal for Montreal, which lost for the eighth time in nine games.

The NHL takes a two-week break for the tournament between Canada, Sweden, Finland and the United States.

Terps' freshman Queen outshines Rutgers duo

Associated Press

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Derik Queen had 29 points and 15 rebounds as No. 18 Maryland beat Rutgers 90-81 on Sunday.

Dylan Harper scored 20 points for the Scarlet Knights (12-12, 5-8 Big Ten), but fellow freshman star Ace Bailey, who sat out a majority of the second half because he was sick, had only four.

Maryland (18-6, 8-5) has won five of six.

Queen had a double-double before halftime and was the most impactful freshman on the court, and as usual Maryland got balanced scoring from its starting lineup. Rodney Rice scored 19 and Selton Miguel added 17.

The Scarlet Knights jumped out to a 14-7 lead, but the Terps dominated the rest of the first half. A 3-pointer by Rice put Maryland up 46-31, and it was

49-38 at halftime.

Rutgers eventually pulled back to within three before the Terrapins pushed the lead into double digits again.

No. 17 Memphis 90, Temple 82: PJ Haggerty had 20 points and seven assists, Dain Dainja added 18 points and eight rebounds, and the host Tigers used a second-half rally to beat the Owls.

Dainja was 5-for-7 from the floor as Memphis (20-4, 10-1 American Athletic Conference) won its seventh straight. The Tigers' last loss and only smudge on their conference record was at Temple on Jan. 16.

Aiden Tobiason scored 18 for Temple, which played its second game without leading scorer Jamal Mashburn Jr., who is dealing with a lower-body injury. Steve Settle had 17 for the Owls (14-10, 6-5) and Quante Berry finished with 16.